

CHAPTER 3: THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION 3/4

- 3.1 This chapter deals with the Borough's natural environment and the natural resources it possesses including areas of landscape and ecological quality, trees and water courses.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BOROUGH AND RECENT TRENDS

- 3.2 Woking has a rich and varied environment and contains over 30 areas which are designated for their ecological value ranging from the internationally important Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest centred on the Borough's heathland habitats to those areas which have a more local interest such as the Local Nature Reserve at White Rose Lane designated in 1996.
- 3.3 These sites provide valuable habitats and together with other key features including canal and river corridors, hedgerows and ponds complete a comprehensive coverage of the Borough linking Statutory and non Statutory sites to provide stepping stones for wildlife from one habitat to another.
- 3.4 Various rare species of flora and fauna protected by National and International legislation are found throughout the Borough, many within the heathland habitats which support their own distinctive species but also spread throughout the Borough in a range of habitats.
- 3.5 Trees and woodland are also important features of wildlife, landscape and amenity value and add considerably to the character of the Borough. A measure of the amenity value is reflected by the number of Tree Preservation Orders which have been made. There are currently over 550 Tree Preservation Orders which give protection to significant trees or groups of trees throughout the Borough. There is a continuing need to protect this valuable resource.
- 3.6 The Borough also contains many areas which make an important contribution to its landscape quality; these areas include the valleys of the River Wey, Bourne and Hoe streams and the Basingstoke Canal. These areas are particularly attractive because of the way in which water enhances views. They form corridors of landscape and ecological value running through the Borough and require protection.

- 3.7 Other notable areas of landscape importance within the Borough are identified and warrant protection because of their visual and physical qualities. Such sites include the Hook Heath, Pyrford and Inkerman Escarpments.

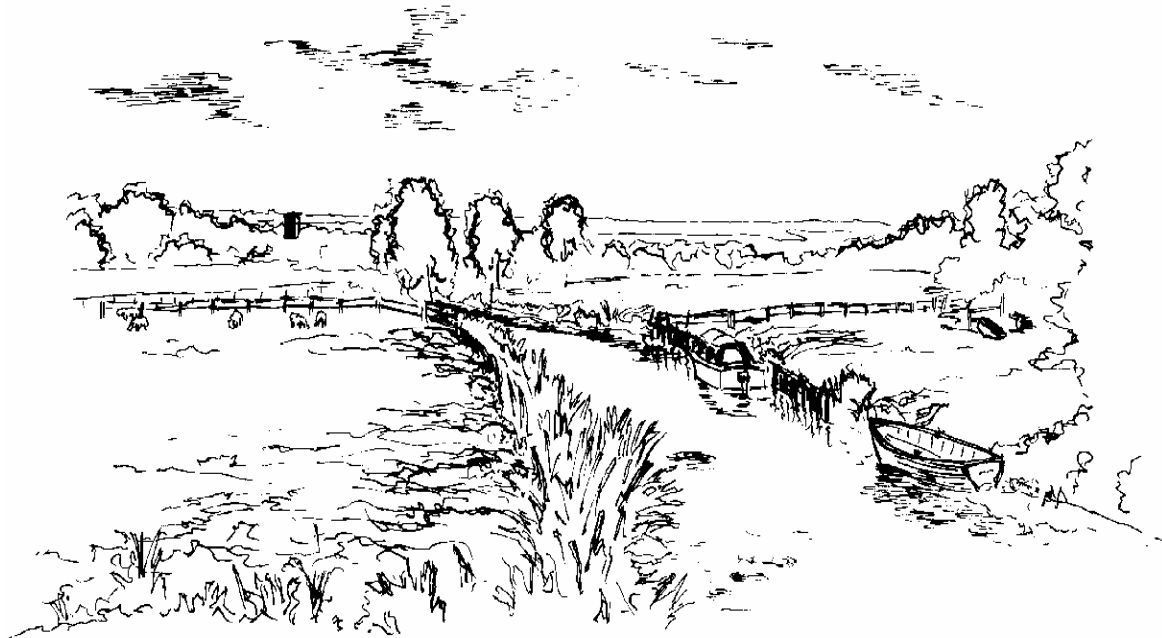
NATIONAL/REGIONAL CONTEXT

- 3.8 The policies in this Plan are guided by Government guidance in the form of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG's) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's). Those of relevance to the Natural Environment Chapter are listed below.
- 3.9 *Regional Planning Guidance for the South East* is provided in *RPG9* which indicates that Surrey, amongst other western counties in the South East Region, has been subject to considerable development pressure and it is therefore important that the remaining areas of environmental quality are protected. Rivers, woodland and areas of ecological value are particularly important to protect.
- 3.10 *PPG7 - The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development* seeks to protect the countryside for the sake of its beauty, diversity of landscape, natural resources and ecological value. Priority should be given to restraint in designated areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- 3.11 *PPG9 - Nature Conservation* supports the conservation of important wildlife and natural features. Local Plans should identify relevant international, national and local nature conservation interests and policies should ensure their protection and enhancement. This advice is echoed in The EC Habitats Directive which states that policies should encourage management of features of landscape importance.
- 3.12 *PPG12 - Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance* indicates the essential role Local Plans have to play in protecting the environment including sustaining the character and diversity of the countryside and wildlife habitats and protection from flooding.
- 3.13 The *1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act* protects certain plant and animal species, including wild birds. Other species such as bats and badgers are protected by their own legislation. The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when development would harm the species or its habitat.
- 3.14 *Government Circular 30/92- Development and Flood Risk* gives advice on development proposals in areas at risk from flooding.
- 3.15 The U.K. Biodiversity Plan which resulted from the Earth Summit held in Rio, has since been adopted as national policy, The overall goal of this document is "to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and to contribute

to the conservation of global biodiversity through all appropriate mechanisms.”

COUNTY PLANNING CONTEXT

- 3.16 The Surrey Structure Plan reflects national and regional policy and provides the strategic policy framework for the Borough. The Plan contains policies which seek to aid the achievement of sustainable development by protecting the environment from harm and conserving natural features. Such natural features include open space, trees, hedgerows, nature conservation areas and areas of landscape value.
- 3.17 River corridors, including the River Wey and Wey Navigation are of particular importance and should be protected and enhanced.
- 3.18 The Structure Plan also expects that new development proposals, where possible, will conserve and enhance existing sites of ecological value and create new areas in both rural and urban locations.



RIVER WEY NEAR OLD WOKING

OTHER COUNCIL POLICIES

Countryside Strategy

3.19 The Council's revised Countryside Strategy for Woking adopted in June 1998 is an overall plan for the management and enhancement of the Borough's countryside and supplements the Borough Local Plan by concentrating on non land use planning matters beyond the scope of a Local Plan. It contains five key aims, of which three are relevant to this Chapter. These seek to:

- § protect and where possible enhance the Borough's 'natural' environment
- § ensure that there is equal opportunity for residents to have access to open spaces, wildlife and the countryside
- § broaden opportunities for the enjoyment of wildlife and the countryside whilst balancing recreational demand with the need to protect the Borough's biodiversity.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

3.20 Protecting the natural environment is a key element in working toward sustainable development. This involves protecting a range of nature conservation sites, from the internationally important heathland habitats to many valuable sites of more local importance. It also means protecting key landscape features of the Borough, particularly river valleys, escarpments and trees. This is recognised in the following key objective:

The Council will protect and enhance the natural environment and natural resources. These include the countryside, urban open spaces and trees, areas of ecological value, good quality agricultural land, water resources and air quality.

3.21 The policies of the Natural Environment Chapter have been developed in the light of this objective and seek to achieve the following objectives:

1. Protect and enhance the nature conservation interests in the Borough
2. Protect features of landscape importance
3. Minimise the risk of increased flooding.

Policies in the Green Belt and Built Environment chapters address the remaining aspects of the key objective, covering good quality agricultural land, urban open spaces and air quality. The policies for the Natural Environment are set out below.

POLICIES 3/4

NATURE CONSERVATION

NE1 Ľ SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS AND SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WITHIN OR AFFECTING A SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA OR SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP UNLESS IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT IT WILL NOT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY MATERIALLY HARM THE NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE OF THE SITE.

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS PERMITTED THE COUNCIL WILL ATTACH SUITABLE CONDITIONS AND/OR SEEK PLANNING OBLIGATIONS TO ENSURE NO MATERIAL HARM OCCURS.

WHEN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS WITHIN OR AFFECTING THESE SITES THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF ANY ASSOCIATED MEASURES TO ENHANCE, MANAGE OR PROTECT THESE AREAS.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.22 Special Protection Areas (SPA's) are classified under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) classified under the EC Directive on Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. Both SPAs and SACs are recognised as being internationally important habitats for threatened species of wildlife. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) are notified under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and are of national importance. Before being designated an SPA or SAC, a site must first be designated an SSSI.
- 3.23 Woking contains six SSSI's which are listed in Appendix 1 and shown on the Proposals Map. Five of these sites contain lowland heathland (approximately 103 ha (255 acres)), an internationally endangered habitat which supports a distinctive flora and fauna including certain endangered species and which creates a distinctive landscape of value in the Borough. This importance is recognised by their provisional listing as a SPA by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) as part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Brookwood Heath has additionally been proposed by the DETR as a candidate SAC. In accordance with PPG9 these provisionally listed sites will be treated as if designated. The remaining SSSI

is the Basingstoke Canal which is designated along its eastern and western sections in Woking.

- 3.24 Because of the importance of these sites any development proposals within or around them will be subject to special scrutiny and the Council is required to consult with English Nature before granting planning permission. Due to their international significance, government guidance is that any development proposal which is likely to significantly affect an SPA or SAC and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for nature conservation will be subject to the most rigorous scrutiny against a number of detailed tests. In most cases development would only be permitted if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest.
- 3.25 The Government has requested that English Nature define consultation areas around SSSI's within which development may have an effect. Pending these areas being defined in Woking the Council will seek the advice of English Nature to determine if a development close to a site will affect it. When large development schemes are considered within or affecting an SPA, SAC or SSSI the Council may require an Environmental Assessment to be submitted. Other limitations also apply within these sites restricting Permitted Development Rights and operations which would normally be outside the scope of planning control.
- 3.26 In appropriate cases the Council will take the opportunity to secure enhancement, management, monitoring or protection of the above sites via Planning Obligations or Conditions. The Council is also taking positive steps to maintain and enhance these sites in the Countryside Strategy and has produced a series of Management Plans for sites in Council ownership. The objectives of the Council's Countryside Strategy are detailed at paragraph 3.19.

NE2 Ÿ LOCAL NATURE RESERVES AND SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED WITHIN OR AFFECTING SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE AND LOCAL NATURE RESERVES AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT IT WOULD NOT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY MATERIALLY HARM THE NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE OF THE SITE.

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS PERMITTED THE COUNCIL WILL ATTACH SUITABLE CONDITIONS AND/OR SEEK PLANNING OBLIGATIONS TO ENSURE NO MATERIAL HARM OCCURS.

WHEN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS WITHIN OR AFFECTING THESE SITES THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF ANY ASSOCIATED MEASURES TO ENHANCE, MANAGE OR PROTECT THESE AREAS.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.27 The Borough contains two Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) which are statutory sites of local importance and 37 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI's) which are of County-wide importance. These sites are listed in Appendix 1.
- 3.28 The Borough's two LNR's offer special opportunities for people to see, learn about and enjoy wildlife in their natural surroundings. The Council, following consultation with English Nature, will continue to designate further LNR's where appropriate.
- 3.29 A comprehensive survey of all potential SNCI's was undertaken by the Surrey Wildlife Trust during the period 1993-6. 37 sites were considered of sufficient importance to warrant SNCI status and are protected for their importance on a County basis and the contribution they make to the network of statutory sites. The advice of the Surrey Wildlife Trust will be sought upon any application either within or affecting an SNCI or an LNR. The term SNCI replaces the previous designation as an Area of Local Ecological Interest.
- 3.30 In appropriate cases the Council will take the opportunity to secure enhancement, management, monitoring or protection of the above sites via Planning Obligations or conditions. The Council is also taking positive steps to maintain and enhance these sites in the Countryside Strategy and produces a series of management plans for sites in Council Ownership. The Countryside Strategy is detailed at paragraph 3.19.

NE3 PROTECTION OF UNDESIGNATED SITES

THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO RETAIN WHEREVER POSSIBLE IN ANY DEVELOPMENT SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF ECOLOGICAL AND/OR LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.31 Wildlife is not confined solely to designated sites but is found throughout the Borough in a variety of locations which may be within the urban area or the countryside. Features such as hedgerows, ancient woodland, ponds, wetlands, water meadows, woodland, copses, species rich grasslands and heathland will often be of significant importance. For instance ponds and ancient woodland can provide important habitats in their own right while features such as hedgerows can act as links between one habitat and another. Hedgerows of particular nature conservation value may be protected by The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and prior consultation with the Council is advised before removal of a hedgerow.
- 3.32 In addition to seeking the retention of these sites the Council will welcome measures to enhance and positively manage them.

NE4 NEW AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE

WHERE APPROPRIATE THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO CREATE NEW AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.33 New wildlife habitats in both rural and urban areas can be of considerable landscape and local interest as well as of conservation value. Many major developments offer opportunities to create new habitats by retaining and enhancing existing features, creating new features such as ponds or simply by providing features common within larger development proposals such as suitable landscaping and planting or areas of open space.
- 3.34 These new habitats can be of significant value in the urban area where they can enhance views and provide habitats where alternatives may be limited. They are also important where there is the possibility that habitats can be linked to provide wildlife corridors.

NE5 SPECIES PROTECTION

WHERE IT IS EVIDENT THAT A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT COULD AFFECT A SPECIES PROTECTED UNDER NATIONAL AND/OR INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION, THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE A THOROUGH SITE SURVEY FROM THE APPLICANT AND WILL CONSULT THE RELEVANT CONSERVATION BODIES.

IF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SITE CONTAINING A PROTECTED SPECIES IS PERMITTED A DEVELOPER WILL BE EXPECTED TO

PROVIDE MITIGATION MEASURES THAT ENSURE THE LONG TERM VIABILITY OF THE POPULATION INCLUDING ADEQUATE MONITORING AND FUNDING.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.35 Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 sets out the protection which is afforded to wild animals, all wild birds and plants. Certain animal and plant species are also protected under EC Directive 92/43 or their own legislation (e.g. bats and badgers).
- 3.36 The Borough contains many protected species and these are not necessarily confined to designated sites of ecological importance referred to in Policies NE1 and NE2. The Surrey Wildlife Trust holds records of the location of many protected species although the Council will also investigate reports from residents and other bodies that a protected species may be present and take expert advice to determine the validity of the claim.
- 3.37 The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a development would result in harm to the species or its habitat. The Council will consult with English Nature and the Surrey Wildlife Trust to determine if any harm would be caused and will consider attaching appropriate conditions or entering into planning obligations to secure the protection of the species.
- 3.38 Many buildings, especially those in the countryside, may contain a protected species and this policy will provide important guidance when the re use of a building is considered under Policy GRB3.

LANDSCAPE

NE6 Y CANALS AND RIVER CORRIDORS

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED WHICH WOULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT UPON THE LANDSCAPE QUALITY, ECOLOGICAL VALUE OR WATER QUALITY OF THE FOLLOWING CORRIDORS:

- § THE VALLEY OF THE WEY AND WEY NAVIGATION
- § THE HOE VALLEY
- § THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL
- § THE BOURNE STREAM.

THE CORRIDORS ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THE COUNCIL WILL, WHERE APPROPRIATE, SEEK THE RESTORATION OR ENHANCEMENT OF THE NATURAL ELEMENTS OF THE RIVER AND CANAL ENVIRONMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF WATER QUALITY.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.39 The Council recognises that river and canal corridors are of great importance for water resources, water quality, nature conservation, angling, and landscape value. This policy will play an important role in protecting these interests.
- 3.40 Rivers and canals are also an important source of open space in their own right and form valuable links or “green chains” between habitats and are crucial for the survival of wildlife. The important habitats along parts of the Basingstoke Canal and the valleys of the Hoe and Wey are designated for their nature conservation importance (see Policies NE1, NE2 and Appendix 1). The remainder of the Basingstoke Canal between Hermitage Bridge and Monument Bridge also has significant wildlife value.
- 3.41 The landscape value of canals, rivers and their valleys are an important attribute and can add considerably to the character of an area. This policy will prevent development which would harm this visual quality by protecting the water course, its immediate banks and wider setting as identified on the Proposals Map. In the case of the River Wey and Wey Navigation a landscape assessment of the river environment is currently being undertaken on behalf of the National Trust and the Countryside Commission. The results of this assessment will identify important landscape characteristics which will be protected by this policy. The Council may consider adopting Supplementary Planning Guidance on this river corridor.
- 3.42 The corridor of the Basingstoke Canal is also worthy of protection. In addition to the considerations set out in this policy the canal is designated as a conservation area and also designated as Urban Open Space where it passes through the urban area and is subject to policy BE7.
- 3.43 In respect of developments likely to affect the river/canal environment and water quality, the Council will consult the Environment Agency, English Nature and other appropriate organisations. River corridors also offer valuable opportunities for recreational pursuits which are considered in policy REC14.

NE7 ÿ ESCARPMENTS AND RISING GROUND OF LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE

WITHIN THE ESCARPMENTS AND RISING GROUND OF LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED ON THE SLOPES OF THE ESCARPMENT OR WHICH WOULD RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN THE EXISTING TREE COVER. DEVELOPMENT ON THE TOP OF THE ESCARPMENTS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.44 In an area of gentle relief, such as Woking, modest escarpments are a particularly important landscape feature which are worth keeping free from development. Even small scale development can have a significant impact upon a wide landscape by nature of the fact that escarpments are visible from many vantage points. Three such escarpments are important in the Borough.
- 3.45 The slopes of the Hook Heath escarpment are a prominent and attractive wooded feature. Existing development is generally confined to the top of the slope. In order to protect the special character of this area, the slopes of the escarpment should be kept free from development and the distinctive wooded landscape retained. Most of the area is in the Green Belt, where very restrictive policies apply to new development.
- 3.46 The Pyrford Escarpment is a significant physical feature dominating the skyline from the Southern approaches to the Borough. The escarpment lies within open countryside in the Green Belt. Development on the slopes or on the top of the escarpment could adversely affect this landscape which makes an important contribution to the character of the Borough. It should be protected from inappropriate development and tree loss.
- 3.47 The Inkerman Escarpment is an undeveloped well wooded feature located within the urban area, with highly developed areas on top of and below the slope. It is of significant value within its surroundings visible from many vantage points and provides a distinctive backdrop to the built development around it. To preserve this quality the slopes of the escarpment should be kept free from development and the wooded landscape retained. The Inkerman Escarpment is also a particularly valuable area of urban open space and is protected by policy BE7.

TREES AND LANDSCAPING

NE8 Y TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

THE COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE TO PROTECT SIGNIFICANT TREES, GROUPS OF TREES OR WOODLANDS BY TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS AND BY PLANNING CONDITIONS AND AGREEMENTS IF:-

- (i) THEY ARE IN GOOD HEALTH; AND
- (ii) THEIR REMOVAL WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND ITS ENJOYMENT BY THE PUBLIC .

IN DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT TO INCLUDE TREES IN TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS, THE COUNCIL WILL ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE POSITION OF THE TREES IN RELATION TO THEIR SURROUNDINGS, THE AMOUNT OF TREE COVER IN THE AREA AND THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND/OR RARITY OF THE SPECIES.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.48 The very large amount of tree cover Woking enjoys is an important and valuable feature which should be protected. Much of the Borough is already protected by Tree Preservation Orders but as new development takes place it will be necessary to ensure that valued trees are retained.
- 3.49 The Council receives many requests for the making of Tree Preservation Orders and it has to be selective in the use of its powers so that the principle of such Orders is not devalued. The policy gives guidance in dealing with specific requests.
- 3.50 Trees also have an important environmental role to play; not only do they enhance views and provide wildlife habitats but also reduce energy consumption through their cooling effect during summer months, reducing wind speeds and absorbing pollution.
- 3.51 Many important trees are found within the Borough's conservation areas and anyone proposing to do work such as pruning and felling is required to give the Council six weeks notice in writing. Within this period the council will inspect the tree(s) and consider if a Tree Preservation Order should be made.

NE9 Y TREES WITHIN DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ON SITES WHICH CONTAIN TREES THE COUNCIL WILL :-

- (i) NOT NORMALLY PERMIT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF TREES OR GROUPS OF TREES OF SIGNIFICANT AMENITY VALUE;

- (ii) IN APPROPRIATE CASES REQUEST TREE SURVEYS TO BE INCLUDED WITH PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SITES WHICH CONTAIN TREES. PROPOSALS SHOULD ALLOW FOR THE RETENTION OF THE BEST SPECIMENS;
- (iii) REQUIRE ANY TREES WHICH ARE TO BE RETAINED TO BE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED TO AVOID DAMAGE DURING CONSTRUCTION;
- (iv) REQUIRE ADEQUATE SPACE TO BE PROVIDED BETWEEN ANY TREES TO BE RETAINED AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDING IMPERVIOUS SURFACES);
- (v) CONSIDER MAKING T.P.O.'s AND/OR ATTACH SUITABLE CONDITIONS OR SEEK LEGAL AGREEMENTS TO SECURE THE PROPER FUTURE MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING TREES AND NEW PLANTING.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.52 The presence of established trees and groups of trees are often an important feature of a development site because they can give a mature feel to the development and can also act as a screen preventing views into and out of the site.
- 3.53 Tree surveys allow the Council to give proper consideration to the appropriateness and desirability of retaining specific trees on a site by taking into account likely root and branch spread. They also allow consideration to be given to alterations to proposed layouts in the interests of saving good specimens. Tree surveys are likely to be required on well wooded sites and on sites where protected trees may be threatened.
- 3.54 Trees can be damaged during construction and it important that preventative measures are taken in good time. The Council will consider attaching appropriate conditions to prevent damage and ensure satisfactory arboricultural works in accordance with the relevant British Standard.
- 3.55 The Council intend to produce supplementary planning guidance for residential development schemes. This guidance will consider trees and landscaping issues in greater detail.

NE10 Y LANDSCAPE DESIGN

THE DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS, INCLUDING THE LOCATION OF BUILDINGS; ORGANISATION OF EXTERNAL SPACES AND CIRCULATION; AND DESIGN OF NEW BUILT OR PLANTED FEATURES SHOULD RESPOND TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE

WHERE APPROPRIATE THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO BE SUPPORTED BY A COMPREHENSIVE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT. THE COUNCIL MAY ALSO REQUEST A LANDSCAPING SCHEME GIVING DETAILS OF NEW HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING.

IN APPROPRIATE CASES THE COUNCIL WILL ATTACH CONDITIONS AND/OR SEEK TO ENTER INTO PLANNING OBLIGATIONS IN ORDER TO SECURE FUTURE MAINTENANCE.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.56 Landscape conservation and enhancement is partly dependent on the appropriate design of new development. The design of new development needs to be responsive to the character of the landscape so that new buildings can be sensitively integrated into the wider landscape. Landscape design may include consideration of location, size and scale of buildings, design of external spaces, use and design of 'hard' landscape features such as walls, paving, fences etc. as well as provision of 'soft' landscape features such as trees, shrubs and grass.
- 3.57 Existing site features should be incorporated in the design of new development wherever possible. New features should reflect the character of features within and surrounding the site and new planting should normally be of a species native to the locality wherever possible. This helps to integrate new features, including built form, into the landscape and supports nature conservation. Certain development sites will require advance planting to allow plants to become established in advance of building works.
- 3.58 The need for landscape assessments will be dependant upon the size and location of individual proposals. Landscape assessments will generally be required with larger residential and commercial developments although the need may be just as important for smaller proposals in sensitive areas. New structure planting can assist in integrating new development, particularly large scale development, into the landscape. Occasionally it may be necessary to mitigate the visual impact of new development with 'screen' planting although the use of 'screens' should not become an excuse for poor development design. Care should be taken to ensure that structure planting and 'screens' are also responsive to the character of local tree belts, woodlands or hedges.
- 3.59 On going maintenance of new features, including planting, is necessary to ensure the long term success of design proposals, a management plan is required to show precisely how this can be achieved.

WATER RESOURCES

NE11 THE FLOOD PLAIN AND SURFACE WATER RUNOFF

IN AREAS AT RISK FROM FLOODING AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP NEW DEVELOPMENT OR THE INTENSIFICATION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING THE FORMATION OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACES WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED.

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE APPROPRIATE FLOOD PROTECTION AND FLOOD COMPENSATION SCHEMES WHERE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING DEVELOPED AREAS IS PERMITTED IN AREAS AT RISK FROM FLOODING.

PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN AN INCREASED FLOOD RISK IN AREAS ELSEWHERE DUE TO ADDITIONAL SURFACE RUNOFF WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS ADEQUATE COMPENSATION SCHEMES ARE PROVIDED.

AT SITES SUSPECTED OF BEING AT RISK OF FLOODING BUT FOR WHICH PRECISE RECENT FLOOD RISK INFORMATION IS UNAVAILABLE, THE COUNCIL MAY REQUIRE DEVELOPERS TO CARRY OUT DETAILED TECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS TO DEMONSTRATE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE POLICY.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.60 Development in areas at risk from flooding reduces the capacity of the available flood plain and impedes the flow of water, thereby increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. It is essential, therefore, to control further development in the flood plains. Areas at risk of flooding, as defined by the Environment Agency, are shown on the Proposals Map.
- 3.61 New development will be unacceptable on land liable to flooding unless alleviation measures are proposed to the satisfaction of the Council and Environment Agency. However, minor forms of development e.g. limited residential extensions which do not materially affect the risk of flooding, will not be subject to this Policy. Outside the flood plain areas, development and redevelopment can exacerbate flooding and drainage problems elsewhere because of increased surface water runoff. It is therefore necessary that hydrological/hydraulic surveys are made and remedial work implemented to control surface water runoff prior to any development taking place.
- 3.62 The Council will continue to consult the Environment Agency on all applications where land drainage considerations may arise.